# HISTORICAL NOTICE

## ON THE ORIGIN OF THE MARONITE NATION AND ITS RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, ON THE DRUZE NATION AND THE VARIOUS POPULATIONS OF MOUNT LEBANON

*(Original: Notice Historique sur l'origine ce la Nation Maronite et sur ses rapports avec La France, sur la Nation Druze et sur les diverses populations du Mont Liban)*

1844

BY
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HASBAYA, LEBANON
Al Shihabi Citadel

CHEHAB
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*Edited and Translated by Taylan Paksoy*
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## Editor's Note

Nicolas Murad's "Historical Notice on the Origin of the Maronite Nation" emerges at a moment of profound political transition in Mount Lebanon. Written in 1844, just three years after the collapse of the Chehab Emirate that had governed the region for generations, this treatise represents both historical documentation and urgent political appeal during a period of unprecedented uncertainty for the Maronite community.

As Maronite Archbishop of Laodicea, Murad's political sympathies are woven subtly throughout his historical narrative. His meticulous documentation of the Chehab dynasty's legitimate succession from the Maan family, his emphasis on their centuries of stable governance, and his detailed account of Emir Bechir's fifty-four year reign reveal an author who views the recent dissolution of the Emirate as a rupture in the natural political order. When he laments that the Maronite nation is "deprived of its protecting princes whose return it ceaselessly solicits," Murad frames the post-1841 governance arrangements as a deviation from historical legitimacy rather than a new political reality.

The dissolution of the Chehab Emirate created a governance vacuum that fundamentally altered Mount Lebanon's political landscape. Murad's detailed genealogy of the ruling families takes on additional significance when we recognize that this system had just collapsed. His description of the Chehab princes governing with "independent" and "absolute" authority stands in stark contrast to the new administrative arrangements being implemented at the time of his writing.

By dedicating the treatise to King Louis Philippe I and meticulously documenting the centuries-old relationship between France and the Maronites, Murad makes a deliberate case for renewed French protection at precisely the moment when traditional power structures in Lebanon had been dismantled. His reference to the French minister's commitment "to return to the Maronites of Lebanon the government they have lost" reveals his vision for political restoration through French intervention.

Particularly valuable is Murad's demographic accounting of Mount Lebanon's religious communities and his descriptions of inter-communal relations. His portrayal of the Druze population and their historical arrival in Lebanon reveals the sectarian tensions that would erupt into widespread violence in the decades following this publication, culminating in the 1860 massacres.

For researchers, this document provides extraordinary insight into how Maronite religious leaders conceived of political legitimacy during this period of transition. Murad's invocation of historical French protection represents a sophisticated diplomatic approach during a period when Ottoman imperial authority was being reconfigured in the aftermath of Mehmet Ali's occupation (1831-1840).

This historical treatise stands as a crucial primary source for understanding the immediate aftermath of the Chehab dynasty's fall and the religious, political, and diplomatic strategies employed by Maronite elites as they navigated a rapidly transforming political structures that would ultimately shape the foundations of modern Lebanon.

Taylan Paksoy
01/22/2025

TO HIS MAJESTY LOUIS PHILIPPE I,

KING OF THE FRENCH.

SIRE,

Since King Louis, of holy memory, all the most Christian kings have honored with their powerful protection the Maronites of Lebanon, whose gratitude has never wavered.

Allow me, SIRE, to place under Your Majesty's protection a Work destined to make this devoted nation known and appreciated in France. Your Majesty, we hope, will not only do for us what his august predecessors have done; we look forward to expecting even more from his high ability and personal influence.

The Maronite nation and I will never cease to pray to the Most High for the preservation and happiness of Your Majesty and his august family.

I am with profound respect,

SIRE,

Your Majesty's

Most humble

and most obedient servant,

NICOLAS MURAD

Maronite Archbishop of Laodicea.

## HISTORICAL NOTICE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE MARONITE NATION AND ON ITS RELATIONS WITH FRANCE, ON THE DRUZE NATION AND ON THE VARIOUS POPULATIONS OF MOUNT LEBANON.

The Maronite nation derives its origin from a holy anchorite called Maron, who lived towards the end of the 4th century, and whose name was held in great veneration in Lebanon and throughout Syria.

Theodoret exalts his piety; the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon mentioned him with praise, and Saint John Chrysostom, light of the oriental church, praises, in his thirty-sixth letter, his heroic virtues while commending himself to his prayers. Saint Basil and Saint Jerome spoke of him with no less enthusiasm; the Greek Menology and the Roman Martyrology place him among the Saints; and Father Rosveido, who wrote an elegant panegyric about him, recounts his miracles. According to the account of Maximus, Archbishop of Cyprus, Saint Maron founded in Syria a great number of monasteries which later became seminaries from which emerged, for the Church, men distinguished by their holiness and by the purity of their doctrine, as was recognized at the second Council of Constantinople in which they took part.

The most famous among these monasteries is the one which, under the reign of Emperor Marcian, was erected near the banks of the Orontes, in memory of Saint Maron. It was from there that emerged, among other victims, the three hundred and fifty courageous martyrs who, under Emperors Severus and Anastasius, shed their blood for the orthodox faith, which is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology, dated July 31st. A monastery no less worthy of veneration is the one that was founded in Constantinople and whose monks, to make the faith of their ancestors triumph, knew how to resist Nestorius and Jacques Béradée, leader of the Severians sect, and then took the name of Maronites, following the example of the Eustasians, defenders of the Council of Nicaea.

If there is, in the Orient, a nation that can pride itself on having always and everywhere professed, with unanimous sentiment and unshakeable firmness, the holy orthodox faith and never having varied in discipline, it is without contradiction the Maronite nation alone, which is proven to the last evidence by the most authentic, most sacred monuments. And this faith of their ancestors, the Maronites preserve it today still, and in all places, sound, pure, without stain, and with such uniformity of sentiment that, however numerous they have been and are at this moment, however surrounded they see themselves on all sides by infidels, heretics, schismatics, never, regarding faith, has the slightest disagreement risen among them, never has any schism divided them, never finally has a single one among them altered the purity of catholic doctrine, which is attested in an unequivocal manner by the following testimony of a sovereign pontiff.

It is therefore wrongly and without any foundation that the Maronite nation has been accused of having, at one time, professed monothelitism: this assertion is fully and victoriously refuted by the most respectable historians and by documents issued by the most learned pontiffs. Among numerous works where this question is skillfully treated and clarified, one can read the one recently published by Professor Dom Jean-Baptiste Palma.

(Tom. II. Proelect. hist. eccl. pages 138 and following) This learned writer clearly demonstrates in his conscientious work that Mosheim, like many others, was gravely mistaken in claiming that the Maronite nation was, at one time, infected with this heresy, and in alleging as proof, in support of his assertion, the name or surname of Mardaïti sometimes given to these people, a word which, in Arabic and Syriac languages, means rebels.

If this surname, adds the same author, was indeed once given to the Maronite nation, it is by no means an indication or an accusation of heresy attributed to them, which any other word would have more clearly signified; it comes solely from the fact that, dissatisfied with Constantine Pogonatus, unable or uncaring to defend their country against the incursions of the Saracens who, once masters of Damascus, infested Lebanon, the Maronites revolted against this prince. At this time, indeed, we see them taking up arms, seizing Damascus, driving the Saracens and all other heretics from their mountains, and this by virtue of a decree issued by their bishops, which, for the preservation of the true faith, prohibited all infidels from staying in Lebanon. As can be read in the chronicle of the Maronites and as positively demonstrated by Faustus Naïrone. (Diss. de orig. nom. ac relig. Maronitarum. Rome 1679.)

Such is, says Pagi in 676, the only origin of this surname of Mardaïti given moreover by heretics alone to the Maronite nation. Indeed, as Naïrone very well notes, this surname is not mentioned at all in history, either before the reign of Pogonatus, or after the Maronites returned to obedience to the emperor. From which it clearly follows that the word Mardaïti is nothing but a qualifying epithet, at one time only, of the political conduct and not of the belief of the Maronite people, and that it would be a gross mistake to use one name for the other.

Further proof, in support of this opinion, is recorded in the book, cited above, by the learned Palma, who does justice to this calumny by reporting the opinion of several celebrated writers, of Joseph Assemanni among others, one of the most learned orientalists. (Biblioth. orient., page 293.) Indeed, one reads in this author that the oldest Maronite calendars alone provide irrefutable proof of the aversion professed at all times by the Maronites against the sect of Monothelites; since, in these ancient ecclesiastical books of the nation, particular mention is made, as a pious memory, of the sixth general council, the one that took place with the aim of condemning this sect and its errors, and that a place is assigned to the names of all the Saints who vigorously resisted monothelitism, such as: Sophronius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, whose memory is celebrated on March 13; André Çonographo, on July 4; Maxime, martyr, on August 13, and Saint Martin, first martyr, on April 3. In these calendars, on the contrary, as the same Assemanni notes, no mention is made of those who favored the false doctrine of monothelitism. It is therefore just and true to recognize that the belief of the Maronites cannot be suspected; that it remained constantly the same, one and invariable, and that the people always remained deeply respectful and submissive towards the Roman Church, mother and mistress of all Churches.

Later, when this nation, having considerably grown and become master of Syria and Phoenicia, as reported by Theophane, Codrenus, Patriarch Stephen Edenensé and others, decided to elect a particular patriarch, to protect itself from all contagion, (as says the

illustrious pontiff Benedict XIV, in his allocution to the consistory of July 13, 1744) "Quo se ab edcontagione (the heresy of the Monothelites) inlegros servarent", which happened in the year 686, in the person of Saint Jean Maron, one of the monks of the Saint-Maron monastery, we then see the act of election of this patriarch submitted to the examination of Pope Sergius, who occupied the seat of Saint Peter, to obtain confirmation as well as the Pallium. This confirmation did indeed take place, and the pious patriarch owed it to his virtues, to a holy and blameless life, to be canonized at his death; the Maronites celebrate his feast on the 2nd of March. Later, Pope Pius VII granted plenary indulgence on the day of this feast to all the faithful in a state of grace who, with his intention, visit a Maronite church, confess and receive communion there, as several other pontiffs had done previously in honor of Saint Maron the anchorite, whose feast is celebrated on the 9th of February.

This submission to the sovereign Pontiff, this recognition of his primacy of jurisdiction over the universal Church, attested by the circumstance of the election of the first Maronite patriarch, the entire nation has never departed from, and has constantly professed them to this day. If it later renewed, and at several periods, the acts and assurances of its union with the Holy See, it followed in this the conduct of all Latins at this same time, it only wanted to give, like them, to the sovereign Pontiff "a new and fervent testimony of its devotion, its respect, its attachment to the cult of Catholic unity," as Benedict XIV recognizes in the above letter.

The Maronite patriarch was then declared patriarch of Antioch by the sovereign Pontiffs, which took place more particularly when, the city of Antioch having been conquered by the cruel Bandécar, Sultan of Egypt, patriarch Elie of Latin nation (who in 1243 had succeeded Régnier), the clergy and the partly French population had withdrawn to Mount Lebanon inhabited by the Maronites.

Simon, then patriarch of Lebanon, welcomed with kindness the dispersed flock, and treated them with that gentleness and affection that, at all times, the Maronites have shown to European nations and to the French in particular. He gave them food, housing and everything that became necessary to them, as is customary among the Maronites, whose hospitable and generous character is rightfully renowned, which is attested by numerous documents and travelers' accounts. Patriarch Simon also gave them land to cultivate, and helped them with all his power in the construction of churches and pious places, where they had taken refuge.

Pontiff Alexander IV having received from the virtuous patriarch notice of all these events and of the situation of these Christians always obedient and respectful towards the Holy Apostolic See, sent him in response, with the most flattering praise, his appointment to the patriarchate of Antioch (as one reads in the allocution of this pontiff).

The same title, with the patriarchal insignia of the Church of Antioch, was granted by Eugene IV to Patriarch David, in 1438.—Nicholas V and Calixtus III, his successor, both sent briefs to Patriarch Jacques-Pierre, to invest him with the same dignity.—Leo X, by a special brief, recommended to the piety of a patriarch, also named Simon, the Catholics dispersed across various points of the Orient. Finally, and to this day, the sovereign pontiffs have granted this same title of patriarch of Antioch to Moïse Accherense, to Jean, to

Georges, to Jean Buali, to Joseph Achel Accourens, to Georges Betteleni, to Etienne Edenensé and to others.

An undoubted proof of this firm and constant union of the Maronite nation to the chair of Saint Peter, also results from the apostolic letters by which Benedict XIV, of holy memory, confirmed the synod of the Maronite nation in 1736; a luminous passage from these letters testifies to the benevolent opinion of several pontiffs regarding the Maronites, and reveals to what extent Benedict XIV, so celebrated for his science and his zeal for Catholicism, judged the Maronite nation worthy of praise: "Venerable Brothers," it is said there, "patriarch, archbishops, bishops and others, belonging to the illustrious Maronite nation, which, since its origin, has professed the orthodox Roman faith, and has preserved it intact amid the infidels, heretics and schismatics by whom it was surrounded, to remain closely attached to the Holy See; your nation has not ceased to render us due obedience, to celebrate its synods, etc."

At the consistory of July 13, 1744, one notes again the following words in the allocution of the same pontiff: "We know, without any doubt, that the Maronite Christians of Syria are subject to the patriarch of Antioch, that is to say the peoples who inhabit Syria, maritime and mediterranean Phoenicia, Palestine, Cyprus, Egypt, and other parts of the Orient, but of whom the major part resides in Lebanon.

We think it is known to you that, towards the end of the 7th century, when the heresy of the Monothelites was ravaging the patriarchate of Antioch, the Maronites knew how to escape this contagion and elected a patriarch who was to be confirmed by the sovereign Pontiff and receive from him the pallium. When, several centuries later, the Saracens, conquerors of the Latins, had occupied Antioch, these same Latin Catholics took refuge in Lebanon where they received the most benevolent welcome from the patriarch of the Maronites, who was then invested by the Roman pontiff, Alexander IV, with the dignity of patriarch of Antioch, which his successors continue to bear, although they make their usual residence in Lebanon.

Thus, the Maronites were always as they are today entirely Catholic, united with the Holy See and full of respect and veneration for the Roman pontiff."

The same pope adds further: "They are equally worthy of all praise, the archbishops, the Maronite bishops and the entire nation; thus we gladly confirm those which have been granted to them by our predecessors, especially when Pius IV, in several of his apostolic letters, affirms that so many thousands of men, of whom the nation is composed, have never worshipped Baal; and, indeed, although besieged by heretics and schismatics, they have always persisted in the Christian faith of the Catholic religion; — When Clement VIII, expressing the same sentiment, adds that the Maronites of the Roman Church, mother and mistress of all the faithful, have always rendered her obedience; — When Paul V says in his letters, that the Maronites are similar to roses and that, by a singular grace of God, they flourish in the Orient, amid the thorns of infidelity, — When Urban VIII, in his apostolic letters, assures that the honor of Carmel has not perished, that the glory of Lebanon is not extinguished, and that the patriarch, the bishops and Maronite priests respect the authority

which belongs to the apostolic see and which resides in the Roman pontiff; — When finally Clement XI, in his apostolic brief, says similar things in favor of the Maronites."

Are these not so many testimonies and irrefutable proofs of the constancy, of the unshakeable firmness of the Maronite nation in the Catholic faith, of its firm will to preserve it intact, of its complete and forever union with the Roman Church, thus justifying these words of Saint Irenaeus that: The faithful from all parts of the world must turn to this Church because of its supreme authority; propter potentiorem principalitatem Ecclesiam convenire, et eos qui sunt undique fideles.

The Maronite nation, which formerly counted a population of more than one million souls, now counts only five hundred and twenty-five thousand, of which four hundred and eighty-two thousand souls are in Mount Lebanon[1], and the rest distributed in Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, in the island of Cyprus and in some other places in Africa or Asia, as well as in Constantinople, all recognizing as their first spiritual leader after the pope, the patriarch established in Mount Lebanon where he has three different residences. This population can put under arms from fifty to sixty thousand men.

Independent of the patriarch, and under his jurisdiction, the Maronites have nine archbishops or diocesan bishops: those of Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Sayda, Eopoli, Potri-Jbeil, Eden, Tripoli and Cyprus. Six others have no seats. Two of these, in partibus, fulfill the functions of vicars with the patriarch, one for spiritual matters, the other for temporal matters; a third resides in Rome, where he represents the nation to the sovereign Pontiff; the last three reside in various convents or colleges of Lebanon. All these archbishops and bishops are appointed and consecrated by the patriarch, who himself, as Maronite patriarch of Antioch, is elected for life by the national bishops and must be confirmed by the pope.[2]

The Maronite monasteries or convents, both of men and women, number eighty-two; the first, numbering sixty-seven, count one thousand four hundred and ten religious; the other fifteen contain three hundred and thirty nuns; all these monasteries have severe statutes confirmed by the Holy See.

The number of churches, outside the convents, amounts to three hundred and fifty-six; they are served by one thousand two hundred and five priests, under the authority of the bishops and the patriarch. The people also recognize and respect ecclesiastical authority, and each one fulfills assiduously and with piety, especially during the holy time of Easter, the duties of a Christian.

Four public colleges maintain students numbering twenty to twenty-five each. There are taught, without any payment, Arabic and Syriac grammars, philosophy, dogmatics, theology, etc.; but only those are admitted to study theology who vow to embrace the

[1] The chain of mountains in question here extends from the vicinity of Sayda, to the west, to the vicinity of Damascus, to the east; it consists of two main branches distinguished by writers under two different names; one to the west, this is Lebanon properly speaking, near the Mediterranean; and Anti-Lebanon, to the east, towards the plains of Damascus, that is to say the branch opposite to Lebanon.

[2] All the details relating to this are contained in the book entitled: Synod of Lebanon, printed by the care of the Congregation of Propaganda, in Rome; a work which contains the various statutes and ecclesiastical laws of the Maronite nation, confirmed by the Holy See.

ecclesiastical state, to obey the patriarch and to devote themselves to missions in the region. For some years the patriarch has designated a particular place where he assembles at his choice, under a superior appointed by him, zealous and educated priests who, throughout the year, go to preach in various directions. This place is called the national mission.

The Maronites follow in every point the Roman calendar, both for the division of time and for the celebration of feasts, except for some particular to them. The mass and offices are said in Syriac language, with the exception however of the gospel, the epistle and some prayers which, for better understanding, are recited in Arabic, the only language known to the people, Syriac being only for the Church as Latin is for Catholics in Europe. Communion is administered with unleavened bread, according to the Roman rite; finally the sacerdotal and pontifical ornaments are the same as in Rome.

The first family in Lebanon, the one in whom temporal authority resides, is the Chehab Maronite family; after it comes the Bellamah family divided into three branches with the names Murad, Kadibey and Fares. This family alone can claim to ally itself with the Chehab family; then and below the preceding ones we must cite the families listed below, distinguished by the title of Sheikh, a title that corresponds to that of noble in Europe; namely: Khazen, Abaichi, Dahdah, Koury, Daller, Hachem, Abousab and Sheikh of Jebbet Becherry. To this last family belongs Botros Karam, well known in France, and from whom H.R.H. the prince of Joinville received the most distinguished welcome during his journey to Mount Lebanon, as will be seen later. None of these families, however important they may be in the country, could ally themselves with the Chehab family; but nothing would prevent an alliance with the Bellamah family. None of them however, nor the latter, could, without special permission, sit in the presence of the Chehab family which, for nearly three hundred years, has governed the Maronites, as is made clear in detail by the genealogical list of reigning princes of this region, following this notice.

Independently of the Maronites, there is still found in Lebanon a population belonging to the Druze nation first established near Aleppo at the beginning of the 11th century, under the reign of the Fatimid caliph Hakem, and which later, around the year 1300, spread throughout Lebanon, where today it counts no more than about eighteen thousand souls; some of these Druzes, in reward for services rendered to the Chehab family, have received from them the title of Sheikh.

The Druzes practice idolatry; the name they bear comes from one of the first apostles of caliph Hakem, called Durzi. Their belief is that man, at his death, is reborn or lives again in another form; and persuaded that Hakem must reappear among them, they worship him as a God in the figure of a calf. The ministers of their idol belong indifferently to either sex and are called by the name of sages, in Arabic a-qel for men and a-qela for women. Certain places are designated for assemblies of their sages near one of their idols, not to engage in prayer which is unknown to them, but to deal with mysterious affairs, most often relating to culpable actions and crimes; for in its stupid ignorance, in its crude fanaticism, the Druze people, who place themselves above all duties of religion and morality, believe everything is permitted, and command or accomplish the greatest crimes without fear or remorse, persuaded that secrecy is sufficient to legitimize everything.

The only worship that the Druzes render to their idol or the faith they have in their calf Hakem, attests to the deplorable ignorance and brutalization of these people. Their devotion consists of a salutation to this god to obtain, by way of blessing, a zebib, or dried grape, with which the sages always take care to fill its mouth, which must fall into a tray placed nearby; an operation entrusted to the sage attached to the idol, and this with mystery and without being seen, by means of a cord internally fixed for this deception in the very body of the god.

The Druze is generally lazy and idle; the works of plowing are the only ones he practices; all trades are unknown to him. With the exception of some men, and in very small numbers, who have more frequent or intimate relations with Christians, the Druzes can neither read nor write; thus they could not live without the Christians of the region, who are familiar with all the professions practiced in Europe.

Thanks to the zeal and fervor of Maronite priests and prelates, a fairly large number of Druzes have already been converted to the Catholic faith, and it is certain that these conversions would become easier and more numerous if the Maronite nation, finding again the powerful protection of the French government, became more peaceful and wealthier.

It is to the time of the crusades that date back, as everyone knows, if not the first contacts, at least the continuous relations of the Orient with Europe. From this moment onwards, communications between Catholics and the Holy See naturally became easier. The Maronites, strong in the energy of their leaders and their firmly established influence in these then inaccessible mountains, had succeeded in extending their political domination over all of Syria. For several years their delegates occupied Antioch and Aleppo; their sovereign influence was even recognized in Jerusalem where they were drawn by the desire to have the holy sepulcher respected.[3]

When, in the year 1249, Saint Louis landed in Cyprus, already a considerable colony of Maronites, numbering about one hundred and eighty-two thousand souls, was found on the island, and from then on was concluded, between the Maronite nation and France, a moral alliance whose memory remains deeply engraved in the spirit of these populations. The Maronites, indeed, became the main support and real strength of the princes of Lusignan, kings of Cyprus, and even then invested with the title of kings of Jerusalem.

The archbishop of Cyprus, called by some historians patriarch of Jerusalem, made his residence in Nicosia, capital of the island; history has preserved the details of the touching and devoted welcome he gave to King Louis; we see him, from the top of his palace terrace, showing the French sovereign the black and varied chains of Lebanon, and the dome of Tabor with its crown of greenery. Louis recruited for his army several mountaineers who, while inviting him to visit their region, offered to lead him there. These mountaineers, it is said, were like the Knights Templar: armed with faith within and iron without.[4]

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[3] See *Histoire du célèbre Patriarche Etienne Edénense* (History of the celebrated Patriarch Etienne Edénense), by Joseph Assemanni, and others.

[4] Saint Louis's great mistake was not to follow this advice: instead of landing at Haironf and securing the immense resources that Syria would have offered him, he preferred to conquer Egypt where he encountered only enemies.

The unfortunate outcome of the Damietta campaign and the defeat at Mansourah are well known. Saint Louis had to mourn the loss of almost all his army, which had been joined by five thousand Maronites of whom only one hundred and two survived: himself taken prisoner, he had to pay 400,000 gold pieces for his ransom, and at this price obtained permission to reach Saint-Jean-d'Acre where he found, but too late, aid in money and men, sent to him by the Maronites. Upon his arrival, a multitude of people, men and women, then descended from the mountains, eager to see the king of France whom, in their oriental language, (sometimes used also, but through treachery, by several princes of Asia,) they called the sword of the world, the son of the law and of the Gospel. The historians of the time estimate at twenty-five thousand men the Maronites that the prince of Lebanon sent to King Louis under the leadership of one of his sons, laden with provisions and presents of all kinds. We place here the letter of this holy king whose memory still lives among the Maronites.

***To the emir of the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, as well as to the patriarch and bishops of this nation.***[5]

"Our heart was filled with joy when we saw your son Simon, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, come to find us on your behalf to bring us the expression of your sentiments and offer us gifts, in addition to the beautiful horses that you sent us. In truth, the sincere friendship that we began to feel with such ardor for the Maronites, during our stay in Cyprus, where they are established, has increased further. We are persuaded that this nation, which we find established under the name of Saint Maron, is a part of the French nation, for its friendship for the French resembles the friendship that the French have for each other. Consequently, it is right that you and all the Maronites enjoy the same protection that the French enjoy near us, and that you be admitted to employment as they are themselves. We invite you, illustrious emir, to work with zeal for the happiness of the inhabitants of Lebanon, and to occupy yourself with creating nobles among the most worthy among you, as it is customary to do in France. And you, lord patriarch, lord bishops, all the clergy, and you, Maronite people, as well as your noble emir, we see with great satisfaction your firm attachment to the Catholic religion and your respect for the head of the Church, successor of Saint Peter in Rome; we encourage you to preserve this respect and to remain always unshakeable in your faith. As for us and those who will succeed us on the throne of France, we promise to give you, and your people, protection, as to the French themselves, and to constantly do what will be necessary for your happiness."

"Given near Saint-Jean-d'Acre, the twenty-first day of May, twelve hundred and fifty, and of our reign the twenty-fourth."

Later, the silk trade brought Maronites to France where, inheriting their fathers' sentiments, they manifested their attachment and devotion to the country and its sovereigns. Under the Valois, in the person of François I; under the Bourbons, in that of Henri IV, and especially Louis XIV and Louis XV, these demonstrations of attachment

[5] This letter is taken from a very old Arabic manuscript that is part of the Maronite archives: the author of the manuscript says he translated it from Latin into Arabic.

became more intimate, and, from France, more immediate protection was assured to the Maronites, as shown in the original letters below from these two sovereigns:

***Letters of protection granted to the Most Reverend Patriarch of Antioch and to the Maronite nation, by the King of France Louis XIV. April 28, 1649.***

"Louis, by the grace of God King of France and Navarre: To all those who will see these present letters: Greetings, Let it be known: That by the advice of the queen regent our most honored lady and mother, having taken and placed, as we take and place by these presents signed by our hand, under our protection and special safeguard, the Most Reverend Patriarch, and all the prelates, ecclesiastical and secular, Maronite Christians, who particularly inhabit Mount Lebanon: we want them to feel its effect on all occasions, and for this purpose, we command our beloved and faithful sir de La Haye-Ventelay, counselor in our councils and our ambassador to the Levant, and all those who will succeed him in this position, to favor them, jointly or separately, with their care, offices, requests and protection, both at the Gate of our very dear and perfect friend the Grand Seigneur, and wherever else needed, so that no ill treatment shall be done to them, but rather that they may freely continue their spiritual exercises and functions. We enjoin the consuls and vice-consuls of the French nation established in the ports and trading posts of the Levant, or others flying the banner of France, present and future, to favor with all their power the said patriarch and all the said Maronite Christians of the said Mount Lebanon, and to embark on French vessels or others, young men and all other Maronite Christians who wish to travel to Christendom, whether to study or for any other business, without taking or demanding from them more than the freight they can give, treating them with all possible gentleness and charity. We pray and request the illustrious and magnificent lords the pashas and officers of His Highness, to favor and assist the archbishop of Tripoli, and all the Maronite prelates and Christians, offering on our part to do likewise for all those who will be recommended to us from their part. Given at Saint-Germain en Laye, the twenty-eighth day of April one thousand six hundred and forty-nine, and of our reign the sixth.

Signed LOUIS.

By the king, the queen regent his mother present,

Loco Sigilli. DE LOMENIE."

***Letters of protection granted to the Most Reverend Patriarch of Antioch and to the Maronite nation, by the most Christian emperor and king Louis XV. April 6, 1737.***

"Louis, by the grace of God, emperor and most Christian king of France and Navarre. To all those who will see these present letters: Greetings. The Patriarch of Antioch and the Maronite Christians established in Mount Lebanon have had it represented to us that, since time immemorial, their nation has been under the protection of the emperors and kings of France our glorious predecessors, whose effects they have felt on all occasions. And they have most humbly beseeched us to grant them our letters of protection and safeguard,

following the example of the late king our most honored lord and great-grandfather, who issued similar ones to them on the twenty-eighth of April one thousand six hundred and forty-nine. And wishing on our part to treat the petitioners favorably: for these causes and other good considerations, moving Us to this; we have taken and placed them, as by these presents signed by our hand, we take and place them under our protection and safeguard; we want them to feel its effects on all occasions; and for this purpose, we command our beloved and faithful counselors in our councils, our ambassadors in Constantinople, consuls and vice-consuls of the French nation established in the ports and trading posts of the Levant, present and future, to favor with their care, offices and protection, the said Patriarch of Antioch, and all the said Maronite Christians of Mount Lebanon, wherever needed, so that no ill treatment shall be done to them, and that they may on the contrary freely continue their spiritual exercises and functions; for such is our pleasure. We pray and request the great emperor of the Muslims, our very dear and perfect friend, and the illustrious pashas and officers of His Highness, to favor and assist with their protection the said Patriarch of Antioch and all the said Maronite Christians, offering to do likewise for all those who will be recommended to us from their part. In witness whereof we have caused our seal to be affixed to these said presents. Given in our imperial castle of Versailles, the twelfth day of April, the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven, and of our reign the twenty-second.

Signed LOUIS."

And on the fold is written:

"By the emperor king: Signed, AMELOT."

A circumstance that further demonstrates the intimacy of the relations established between the Maronite nation and the French government, and the confidence that the latter accorded to it, is that, from the time of Louis XIV until Bonaparte, the French consuls in Beirut were always from the Maronite nation, consistently chosen from one of the two families Khazen and Koury. It was one of these consuls, called Gandour Koury, who was also minister to Prince Joseph Chehab, who, invited with his master to a conference at the palace of Djezzar Pasha, was like him hanged at the gate of Saint-Jean d'Acre, by order of this traitor and in hatred of the French name.

These Maronite consuls, the French government is not unaware, received neither favors nor salary from the France they represented, and never did their zeal, never did their devotion slacken. Then, in their region, French vessels and travelers were welcomed with eagerness and distinction, with frank and cordial hospitality; the arrival of one of these ships was greeted with joy and happiness, its national flag flew over the convents, seminaries and colleges; Lebanon finally, like another French land, was free and easily accessible to subjects or protégés of the King of France equal to the Maronites. Far from troubling them, the Turks openly recognized France's protection, and in their letters or responses to the

Maronites, this formula was constantly used by them: "To the Maronite-Frank nation, to the Maronite-Franks."[6]

It was shortly after the assassination of Consul Gandour Koury and Prince Joseph Chehab that the cruel Djezzar, hoping to seize Lebanon, sent an army of approximately forty-two thousand men toward the mountain, who were defeated by the Lebanese who came to meet him. New troops were successively beaten, and after three years of fruitless struggle, Djezzar decided to send a letter to Emir Bechir (the same one who is now in Constantinople), to make peace with him and assure him of his friendship. Djezzar died without being able to realize a project that in his heart he never abandoned, that of seizing these mountains.

Djezzar was succeeded by Soliman-Pasha who lived for many years in Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Under his entirely peaceful and just administration, Syria could enjoy complete tranquility; he died esteemed and regretted by all.

Abdullah-Pasha was given to him as successor, an ambitious and harsh man who, like Djezzar, put everything to work, presents, threats, ruses, but uselessly, to subdue or have Lebanon conceded to him. He had Djezzar's vices, but he did not have his talents.

It was under the administration of this pasha that Mehmet Ali's army, commanded by Ibrahim Pasha, his son, took possession of Syria. This prince, having made Abdullah prisoner, became his successor. As ambitious, but more skilled and thoughtful than his predecessors, Ibrahim had only one goal to facilitate the execution of his projects on Lebanon, the exclusion of the Chehab family. However, he soon abandoned this idea, aware of this chief's influence over the Maronites, and foreseeing the concerns and continuous movements that would follow such an act.

Ibrahim, as is known, had to evacuate Syria in 1840. We will recount in a complete history already written at this moment, the events, day by day, the maneuvers of all kinds employed since that time until the time we publish it, relating to these unfortunate regions.

We will be especially happy to particularly mention there the honorable names of those who, in these various circumstances, have given the Maronite nation proofs of sympathy or assistance, and of those still whose devotion is assured to it.

Let it be permitted to us who come to speak of our hospitality, and who have received such a benevolent welcome on this French soil, second homeland of the Maronites, to name here, by anticipation, one of the beautiful, noble foundations of the Catholic world: this seminary of Foreign Missions, from which emerge each year modest and devoted priests, who with a zeal that nothing can tire, go through a thousand dangers, often in view of martyrdom, to preach to the unfaithful, to the ends of the world, the holy religion of Jesus Christ, and thus render, through their virtues and their devotion, the French name so commendable and so glorious.

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[6] It is known that the name Frank, today used in the Orient as equivalent to the word European, was originally the translation of the word French, often written at that time in Latin as Francus, and it is as a consequence of this appellation that the Maronites had their free worship in all cities under Muslim rule as well as in their mountains, equal to French churches and unlike other Eastern Catholic nations who could not celebrate their worship publicly.

We could not express with what generosity the Superior and Directors of this establishment welcomed us during our long stay in this capital. May they kindly accept here the new testimonies of our deep gratitude. We are happy to have been able to appreciate their gentleness, their constant harmony, and the constant practice of virtues that make them so worthy of their noble vocation. Happy are the regions that receive and know how to appreciate these pious missionaries! A thousand times happy is the country that possesses and knows how to encourage such a beautiful, such a useful establishment.

This devotion of the Maronite nation towards France is further attested by the conduct it held towards Bonaparte, whom nevertheless they regarded as the enemy of the Church. When this general arrived at Saint-Jean-d'Acre, he momentarily lacked provisions, and would have found himself in cruel embarrassment if the Maronites had not brought him food; "It is for our brothers the French that we are sent, they said, and not for you who persecute the Roman Catholic Church." Bonaparte sent them the next day his interpreter secretary, Chevalier Amédée Jaubert (today peer of France), charged with expressing his thanks to them, and translating these exact words: "I recognize that the Maronites are French from time immemorial; I too am Roman Catholic; you will see that through me the Church will triumph and spread far and wide."

In 1826 still, while the war of the Turks with the Greeks dictated to the former, through the mouth of the pasha of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, the barbaric order to Emir Bechir-Chehab, to neither admit nor tolerate in Lebanon any of the French, consuls and others, who were in Syria, weren't these same French on the contrary welcomed with eagerness? Didn't they receive the most cordial hospitality?

Finally, more recently, who does not remember the visit that one of the sons of the current king of France, M. le prince de Joinville, made to Syria in 1836, and the welcome he received! Having landed in Tripoli, the prince hastened to reach Eden to admire the famous cedars of Lebanon. Arriving at night, he found there a multitude of Maronites, men and women, who had rushed to see him, and who, mixed with the local population, had been waiting for him since evening already with lanterns, greeted him with their music and with universally repeated cries of long live the son of our king! The Maronite sheikh Botros-Karam, having come to meet him, invited the prince to his dwelling where a supper had been prepared. His Highness spent the night there, and the next morning, barely awake, he received the visit of the vicar-bishop and the patriarch's secretary charged with accompanying him to the famous cedars, three or four hours from Eden where the high prelate awaited him. There, under one of these ancient cedars, a breakfast was offered to the prince during which were renewed several times, from the patriarch in the name of the Maronite nation, the most formal assurances of friendship and devotion, and from the French prince those of complete recognition and protection. Sorry for not being able to go to the patriarch's palace, the prince returned the same evening to Eden accompanied by the acclamations and blessings of the people.

The following day, in the Saint-Georges church of Eden, the wedding of one of Botros-Karam's daughters with one of her relatives was celebrated; the prince de Joinville deigned

to appear as witness, gave presents to the two spouses, and set off again for Tripoli, escorted by sheikh Botros, his sons and the chiefs of the region, all delighted and proud of the affability and grace of a prince whose name they love to repeat and whose presence they like to remember.

Barely a month had passed when Ibrahim-Pasha, under the pretext of coming to restore his health, reappeared in Eden where the French prince had received such a brilliant welcome, and struck by the calm, the lack of eagerness of the population, he could not help expressing his astonishment: "Why then," he said, "do you receive me with this calm and silence, you who gave prince de Joinville so many honors and celebrations?" - "It is because we are French," he was answered, "and we were celebrating a French prince, our protector." The pasha chose to laugh, and did not prolong his stay in Eden.

The limits of this Notice do not allow us to name here the honorable men of all ranks who, since this prince or even before his arrival, came from France to our mountains, where they each particularly recommended the French nation. These details, which would take us too far, will be found in their entirety in the complete work announced above.

The events of these last four years have weighed upon it in a cruel manner, and if the heart of these old protégés of France has not been changed, their position has become such that today they have only goodwill to offer, only wishes to form, when a traveler from this friendly nation comes to visit their region. For those who have known and remember these abundant and generous marks of their old hospitality, what they do today is very little, no doubt; but for those who have followed them through all their ills, all their torments, all these phases of their adversity, it is still much, it is perhaps more, given the new circumstances; they resemble that widow of whom Jesus Christ speaks, "who had given more than all others, since her penny was all that she possessed."

What a change, indeed, the last four years have been sufficient to bring about in this region! Daily insulted by the infidel, overwhelmed by the most cruel outrages, the most revolting humiliations, deprived of its protecting princes whose return it ceaselessly solicits, the Maronite nation believed it saw revive these times of persecution, of sad, of horrible memory; many of its sons, torn from their country, groan among the infidels, in oppression and in slavery, fortunate if, in their pains and in their tortures, they remain faithful to the true faith, to the religion of their brothers! Twenty-two convents burned, sixty-five churches ransacked, religious men and women, priests massacred in great numbers; the ornaments of worship pillaged and torn to pieces, more than twenty thousand houses destroyed from top to bottom; such are the frightful desolations that have marked these last years, such is the cruel and painful picture that today offers a region that was still tranquil not long ago, if not happy, and which loved to place in the powerful government of France so much confidence and hope!

And yet, since the holy king Louis, the most authentic titles assure the Maronite nation a formal protection; and from time immemorial, and still now, the French consuls, distinguished in Maronite churches by a reserved place, attend mass in official costume, holding their naked sword at the reading of the gospel as a sign of protection, and thus

renewing, by this ceremony alone, the commitment so many times made by France, to make respected the religion, churches and Christian populations of these regions.

Without doubt, and despite all its sufferings, the Maronite nation is neither without strength nor without courage, and had it only that of despair, if France were to protect it only with its wishes, it would still not hesitate to struggle against its oppressors, to defend its faith against despotism, against the hatred of the infidel. Every man would then become a soldier, every Christian of these mountains would be glorious to shed for his holy religion to the last drop of his blood, preferring death to humiliation, martyrdom to slavery. But France, we hope, will not remain indifferent to our pains, deaf to our complaints and prayers; on more than one count it owes to the Maronite Christians its effective and powerful protection. As Catholic, could it see its brothers in Jesus Christ oppressed, slaughtered in cold blood? As a great power, is it not committed by the most formal assurances, by treaties, by the letters of its kings? Would gratitude not be enough to make this protection its duty? Would it no longer remember the conduct at all times so respectful, so devoted, of the Maronites towards it, the so distinguished welcome given to its subjects, the hospitality always offered with such eagerness and selflessness to its travelers, often at the risk of the greatest dangers; of the care it has taken finally to spread, to exalt everywhere in the Orient the glory of its name, the greatness of its people, the piety of its kings?

No, we will not have vainly exhaled our complaints, exposed our grievances to the powerful government of France, and it is with happiness that we heard its minister, in one of the last sessions of the Chamber (May 28), renew before the country the commitment already made to us to support the Catholics of Syria, and to use everything possible to return to the Maronites of Lebanon the government they have lost and which they call for with all their wishes.

Then a new era will have begun for us; then the French name will be more than ever exalted and blessed in our mountains.

After having briefly exposed the intimate relations of the Maronite Nation with France, and the constant protection granted to it by so many august sovereigns of happy memory, after having spoken of the sufferings and poverty of our nation, French by sentiments as by religion, may we be permitted to address ourselves here to charity, this virtue so well understood, so nobly practiced in France. May our recommendation be profitable to our compatriots! May our wishes be granted! God, we hope, will return double to whoever gives, and the prayers of all will call each day for the graces and blessings of heaven upon them and upon all of France.

## GENEALOGY OF THE PRINCES OF LEBANON

For six hundred years, the princely Maan family governed the provinces of Lebanon, and the Chehab family ruled the two contiguous provinces, Hasbaiya and Rashaya (on this side of Lebanon). These two families were united by blood.

The last prince of the Maan family, named Ahmed, son of emir Jonqs and nephew of the celebrated emir Faker-Aldin, had a sister and a daughter who both allied themselves through marriage to two princes of the Chehab family.

Emir Ahmed, being in danger of death, disposed by testament that, in case of death of the only male child who remained to him, the principality of Lebanon should pass to his nephew ex filiâ, emir Haidar Chehab.

The said emir Ahmed having come to die, and after him his only son, emir Haidar Chehab, nephew of the aforementioned Ahmed, succeeded him; however, given his minority, the regency of Lebanon was entrusted to emir Bechir Chehab, nephew ex sorore of emir Ahmed, and guardian of his ward.

After nine years of regency, emir Bechir Chehab having died, emir Haidar, having come of age, took the reins of government which he kept for at least twenty-four years. Having become old and bearing such a burden poorly, he renounced the principality in favor of emir Melhem Chehab his son, who, after the death of his father, continued to govern these peoples for twenty-five other years.

To emir Melhem Chehab succeeded the two princes Ahmed and Mansour Chehab who governed the country two years together; after them, the entire government of Lebanon fell to emir Mansour Chehab and lasted in him the space of about seventeen years.

At the death of emir Mansour, this principality was devolved to emir Joseph Chehab who possessed it for eighteen entire years.

After emir Joseph Chehab, emir Bechir, currently in Constantinople, was invested with the government of Lebanon, which consolidated in his person for fifty-four years.

The tribes of the Maronites established themselves in Syria from the end of the 4th century, that is to say one thousand four hundred and thirty-two years ago, and almost all fixed their dwelling in Lebanon.

The Druzes extended almost all from Djebele-Udla (high mountain) towards Aleppo. In 1300 they inhabited Houran, near Damascus, and it was only in 1400 that they decided to establish themselves in Lebanon. There they lent their services to the princes who tolerated their residence in the mountain.

The princely families, both Maan and Chehab, are, from ancient times, contemporaneous, and it was still a hundred years ago that the princes of Lebanon were not charged with any tribute towards the Sublime Porte. It is only at this time that the Chehab family, to avoid

all torments and vexations from the Turks, began to submit to it and to pay to the pasha of Sayda an annual tribute of one hundred and thirty purses.

Nevertheless, as for the mode of governing, the Chehab princes, like the Maan princes, always maintained themselves independent, their authority and their empire were constantly absolute towards their subjects.

## TABLE OF VARIOUS NATIONS INHABITING MOUNT LEBANON

We thought it useful to add to this Notice on Mount Lebanon the following details regarding the populations that compose it, namely:

**MARONITES**, four hundred and eighty-two thousand five hundred souls (482,500);

Eighty-two monasteries or convents, both for men and women, comprising one thousand four hundred and ten monks and three hundred and thirty nuns.

Four public colleges, each with twenty to thirty students.

One house of National Missionaries.

A patriarch, first spiritual leader, after the sovereign pontiff, not only of the Maronites in Lebanon but of Maronites wherever they may be;

Fifteen archbishops and bishops.

One thousand two hundred and five priests.

**CATHOLIC MELKITE GREEKS**, six to seven thousand (6,000-7,000).

Twelve convents both for men and women, each comprising from four to approximately thirty people.

One college.

**CATHOLIC SYRIANS**, two monasteries for men, from one to eight. — No nation.

**CATHOLIC ARMENIANS**, three monasteries for men from two to thirty. — No nation.

The three patriarchs - Melkite Greek, Syrian, and Armenian - established themselves in Lebanon under the protection and assistance of the Maronites, and until the time Syria was taken over by Mehmet Ali, they were forbidden to leave the mountain. It was only under the government of this pasha, around 1833, that they had the freedom to settle where they pleased, to build churches elsewhere, and finally to extend their worship to other places in the region. Towards these, as towards all Europeans, the Maronite nation has consistently shown itself zealous and hospitable; and where these Melkite Catholics and others had no churches, as in Damascus and Aleppo, it has always been eager to put its temples and clergy at their disposal.

**NON-UNITED GREEKS,** seven thousand (7,000).

Five monasteries, each containing from one to eight religious.

**DRUZE**, eighteen thousand souls (18,000);

**TURKS,** about one hundred individuals (100) scattered across various points;

**MOUTUALIS** (particular sect of Muslims), approximately eight hundred souls (800).

In addition to this indigenous population, we count also on Mount Lebanon the following European establishments, namely:

Two houses of **LAZARISTS**;

Two houses of **JESUITS**;

One **FRANCISCAN** monastery;

Two **CAPUCIN** monasteries;

One **CARMELITE** monastery.

These various monasteries or houses comprise hardly more than one to six religious each.[7]

[7] All these European convents, as well as the Syrian and Armenian monasteries, and some of the Catholic Melkite Greek ones, were granted free of charge, as far as the land is concerned, by the Maronites who, moreover, helped and facilitated the construction, as established by official titles.